



Book Club Notes: *She Seduced Me: A Love Affair with Rome*

Described as “magical, mystical, captivating, tears in my eyes when I knew I was at the end...”, *She Seduced Me* is a collection of stories of Romans, artists, Emperors, expats, holy, not so holy and a city that embraces all. Your book club will be swept up into the streets of Rome, following in the steps of Caravaggio, encountering Nero and interviewing some of the people that make the city unique. It is the people that give meaning to the buildings, art and culture in Rome and the book invites the reader to see beyond the black and whiteness of life to experience a bit of the magic that comes from their stories.

- Rome’s buildings, fountains, street corners and sculptures all have their own story. How important is it that a story is based on fact or legend? What is the

relationship between “story” and “meaning”?

- There have been performers in the streets of Rome for thousands of years. What would drive someone to perform in the street every day for donations? Are there any reasons besides necessity that you can think of? Do you admire these people? Why or why not?
- How did the stories of the individual street performers affect you? Which one were you most drawn to? Why?
- What are some of the stories that archeology can tell about those who lived in a place or time far from ours?
- The Romans interviewed found American visitors both funny and enlightening. How can foreigners change our points of view?
- Italy is known for its great food and restaurants. How can food, and even an individual restaurant, be an expression of a culture?
- How do the views of Romans, expats and Italian residents of the city differ? How are they the same? How do you account for this?
- The marriage of Emperor Augustus and Livia was held up as a model in ancient Rome, and yet the frescoes in their home are perplexing. How do you understand this?
- Caravaggio was both an artist who had insights into the divine and a street thug. How do you account for this? Is there a connection?
- When we watch other people, what types of things do we often base our judgements on? Why?
- The Mithraic cult was popular among Roman soldiers since it gave meaning and unity to their lives which were often in far flung provinces. What types of things gives you life meaning and a sense of belonging? How does this compare with the cult of Mithras?
- Do you think that the expats interviewed were happy with their life in Rome? Would you ever consider moving to another country? Why or what not?
- The Vatican museum was envisioned in the context of Renaissance humanism, in which human and divine were not seen as in conflict. How is this the same or different today?